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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was designed to document the nature of programs provided to learning disabled students and to determine the educational bases for these programs. A national sample of 128 teachers of learning disabled (LD) students completed a survey about the program of one of their students. Responses varied widely in terms of the amount of time service was provided; the academic areas covered; the materials, methods, motivational strategies, and evaluation procedures used; and the major influences on decisions reported by teachers. There was no consensus among those who actually teach LD students as to an instructional approach or group of approaches most useful in instruction. Teachers, however, reported satisfaction with their programs and the progress of the student. Educational researchers should recognize this satisfaction and attend to what teachers perceive to be effective practice when asking them to alter instructional approaches. (Author/DB)

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Research Report No. 80

A SURVEY OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES OF LD TEACHERS

Phyllis K. Mirkin and Margaret J. Potter

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July, 1982

Abstract

As in regular education, attempts to identify generalizable concomitants of effective teaching in special education have been less than successful. For this reason, some researchers now believe that it is more useful to consider not only what teachers do, but why they do what they do. The present investigation was designed to document the nature of programs provided to learning disabled students and to determine the bases for these programs. A national sample of 128 teachers of learning disabled students completed a survey about the program of one of their students. Responses varied widely in terms of the amount of time service was provided, the academic areas covered, the materials, methods, motivational strategies, and evaluation procedures used, and the major influences on decisions reported by teachers. There was no consensus among those who actually teach LD students as to an instructional approach or group of approaches most useful in instruction. Teachers, however, reported satisfaction with their programs and the progress of the student. Educational researchers should recognize this satisfaction and attend to what teachers perceive to be effective practice when asking them to alter instructional approaches.

A Survey of Program Planning and Implementation

Practices of LD Teachers

Examination of teacher thinking is a relatively recent development in research on teaching. It is considered by some (Clark, 1979; Medley, 1979) to be the most recent approach in attempts to understand and characterize teacher effectiveness. Previous teacher effectiveness research focused on identification of salient teacher personality traits and characteristics, examination of methods of teaching used, and consideration of classroom climate and interaction between teachers and students.

Clark (1979) described five different approaches to research on teacher effectiveness that have been used in recent years--he characterized three of these approaches as "quantitative" (process-product, aptitude-treatment interaction, and engaged time) and two as "qualitative" (ethnographic and cognitive information processing). Clark's thesis was that researchers, confronted with equivocal results in teacher effectiveness studies, have opted either to attempt to improve and make more rigorous the measurement procedures used in the "quantitative" studies, or to change the traditional questions of "What works?" and/or "What works with whom?" to the more qualitative question of "What is happening here and why?"

Hunter (1979) defined teaching as "the process of making and implementing decisions, before, during, and after instruction, to increase the probability of learning" (p. 62). Shavelson (1973) called decision making the basic skill of teaching; according to Clark and Yinger (1979), "much of what is truly professional in a teacher's life is a private process of applying theoretical knowledge to

particular cases, problems, and situations" (p. 7). Clark and Yinger called for continued research on teacher thinking, arguing that a more public description of the processes of teacher thinking might facilitate professional communication. Rather than the formulation of general laws of human behavior, Clark and Yinger saw the main benefit of investigation of the mental lives of teachers as being the development of a set of concepts useful for "thinking about, organizing, and making sense of the classroom world" (p. 7). They considered this descriptive type of research to be "conceptual research," as opposed to decision-oriented or conclusion-oriented research. Although research on teacher thinking generally is conceived of as descriptive rather than prescriptive, Clark (1978) viewed it as playing a vital role in the application of research to practice:

> Research on teacher thinking is a logical outgrowth of research approaches that emphasize teacher behavior. But teacher behavior sensible and effective in one setting may be inappropriate in another, and it is the individual teacher who has to define the teaching situation and make decisions about appropriateness. So if research is to be put into practice--if the general case is to be applied in particular situations--then researchers must know more about how teachers exercise judgment, make decisions, define appropriateness and express thoughts in their actions. (p. 1)

Except for a few studies that examined the diagnostic practices of reading clinicians (Gil, Hoffmeyer, VanRoekel, & Weinshank, 1979; Gil, Vinsonhaler, & Wagner, 1979; Gil, Wagner, & Vinsonhaler, 1979; Weinshank, 1978, 1980) and a study that compared learning disabilities teachers to reading clinicians (Gil, Hoffmeyer et al., 1979), research on teacher thinking has concentrated primarily on regular classroom teachers. Some of the findings of research in regular education very

likely are applicable in special education; however, the situation and the constraints operating in special education settings are generally very different from those in regular education. For example, special education teachers usually deal with fewer students than do regular education teachers, and more often instruction is on an individual basis. Also, special education teachers often must coordinate their instruction with that of another teacher, and their instruction may be determined in part by that other teacher. They generally have much more diagnostic information available about a student and must operate under the constraints of a law that requires a written educational plan with specified goals and objectives.

A few investigators have examined decisions made about students before the students actually start receiving special education services, that is, classification and placement decisions (Applied Management Sciences, 1979; Poland, Ysseldyke, Thurlow & Mirkin, 1979; Rucker & Vautour, 1981; Thurlow & Ysseldyke, 1979; Yoshida, Fenton, Maxwell & Kaufman, 1978; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Regan, Potter, Richey, & Thurlow, 1980; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1980; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1980), but little is known about what happens to students instructionally once they are in special education. Many individuals have written about recommended instructional practices of special education teachers, but these writers generally have not considered what it is that special education teachers currently are doing and why they are doing what they do. Yet, the degree to which teachers are willing to modify their practices very likely is strongly related to their current practices and their reasons for operating as they do.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the instructional planning and evaluation practices of special education teachers. Specifically, it was designed to document the nature of programs provided to learning disabled students and to determine the bases for these programs and the bases for teachers' decisions to continue or change the intervention strategies used with specific students. Of particular interest were the ongoing evaluation practices of learning disabilities teachers.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 128 teachers of learning disabled students who completed a survey on instructional program planning and implementation practices. The survey was sent to 373 individuals randomly selected from the national membership list of the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children. CLD members who received the survey but who were not currently providing instructional service to students were asked to pass the survey on to a colleague or to return it uncompleted. Of the 373 surveys mailed, 34% (n = 128) were returned completed and 9% (n = 34) were returned blank (total return = 43%). All individuals were offered a research report or monograph of their choice (from a list of six publications of the Institute for Research on Learning Disabilities) and a summary of the survey results for returning the form.

The subjects were from 42 states and were distributed fairly evenly among rural (27%), suburban (34%), and urban (28%) school

districts (unknown = 10%). Most (88%) of the teachers were female, almost three-quarters (73%) held at least a master's degree, and the average number of years of experience teaching special education students was 6.3 (SD = 3.7; median = 6.0; range = 1-16). Fifty-two percent of the teachers taught in elementary schools, 13% taught in middle schools or junior high schools, and 14% instructed senior high students. The remaining subjects either taught at more than one level, taught in vocational/rehabilitation centers, etc., or did not specify the level in which they taught. For the 120 subjects who provided direct service instruction, the average number of students taught per teacher was 19.3 (SD = 9.3; median = 16.7; range = 1-60). Fifty-one teachers (32%) indicated that they provided indirect service to an average of 38 students each (SD = 133.8; median = 5.2; range = 1-1,000).

Materials

A program planning and implementation survey was constructed based on comprehensive interviews of 20 learning disabilities teachers in Minnesota. The survey consisted of eight sections: (a) school and teacher information, (b) student information, (c) selection of IEP goals and objectives, (d) program description, (e) determinants of the program, (f) changes in the original instructional plan, (g) evaluation of progress, and (h) miscellaneous. A supplementary form to be used in response selection accompanied the survey. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey and supplemental form.

A cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and described the procedure for selecting one student from the teacher's caseload

whose program would be referred to when responding to survey items. The letter and survey were sent along with a stamped return envelope and a form to be returned by those interested in receiving a summary report of the results and/or one of six listed research reports or monographs.

Procedure

Surveys were mailed to the 373 CLD members in the late spring of the 1980-1981 school year; 250 surveys were mailed in mid-April, and the remainder were sent in early May. For those in the April mailing who had not responded, a reminder was sent at the time of the May mailing.

Two numbers were assigned to each survey. The first was used to monitor the geographic area from which completed surveys were received and to facilitate the sending of follow-up notices. The second was a randomly selected number between 1 and 15; teachers with caseloads of approximately 15 students were asked to use this number to determine which student's program they would describe as they completed the survey. Teachers who did not have approximately 15 students were asked to devise an alternate method for random selection of a student.

Data Analysis

For purposes of data analyses, responses to items in Sections C (Sources of Information), G (Influential Factors) and E (Types of Evaluation) of the survey were grouped into categories. Four categories of responses were formed for Sections C and G, and five categories were formed for Section E of the survey. Table 1 is a list of the categories and the component items of each. Data analyses

consisted of descriptive and nonparametric statistics.

Insert Table 1 about here

Results

Data collected from the survey were analyzed in five major areas: (a) student characteristics, (b) program description, (c) bases for program decisions, (d) evaluation practices, and (e) teacher satisfaction and attributions for program success. Survey results will be reported for each. Not all respondents completed all items on the survey; therefore, the *n*'s reported below vary from item to item.

Student Characteristics

The average age of the students selected from the teachers' caseloads was 11.5 years (*SD* = 3.1; range = 4 - 18). The most frequently repo.ted grades were third (16%) and fourth (14%); the remaining students were distributed fairly evenly across grades 1-11, with one student reported to be in grade 12 and one in preschool (see Table 2). Of those whose race was reported, three-quarters (76%) of the students were reported to be Caucasian, 13% were Black, and 4% belonged to other races. Thirty percent of the students had received services for one year or less, and a total of 68% had received services for three years or less.

Insert Table 2 about here

Thirty-six percent of the responding teachers had worked with the

student whose program they were describing for more than one year (i.e., they started working with the students in 1979 or earlier); one teacher had worked with the student for eight years. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) had been written within the past year for 97% of the students. For those students whose IEP had been reviewed after it was written (n = 60), 90% had their review take place during the spring of 1981. The breakdowns of number of years of special education service, the date the teacher started providing service to the student, the year the most recent IEP was written, and the year of the most recent IEP review are listed in Tables 3 and 4.

Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here

Program Description

Type of service. When asked what level of service was being provided, 70% of the teachers indicated that they worked directly with the students for up to four hours a day (Level III service); 12% taught students in a full-time self-contained classroom (Level V service), while 7% provided indirect (Level I or II) service to the students (see Table 5).

Insert Table 5 about here

For the 110 teachers (85% of the total) whose target student received instruction in reading, the average amount of special education service the student received per day in reading was 42.5

minutes (SD = 25.7; range = 3 - 120). Math instruction was provided to 88 target students (69%) for an average of 37.2 minutes per day (SD = 17.7; range = 3 - 60). Instruction in spelling totaled an average of 22.3 minutes per day (SD = 14.4; range = 3 - 60) for 84% of the students, and written language accounted for an average of 25.2 minutes per day (SD = 17.4; range = 3 - 100) of instructional time for 81 students (63%). Fifty-one teachers (41%) indicated that an average of 45.0 minutes per day (SD = 43.4; range = 3 - 200) was spent in areas other than reading, math, spelling, and written language. The areas in which this time was spent varied greatly and included such topics as social studies, science, behavior, fine motor development, art, affective education, career education, thinking skills, study skills, and other similar school subjects. The above times were calculated on the basis of a five-day week; times based on less than a five-day week were transformed into their five-day equivalent.

Teachers were asked whether the instruction they provided in reading, math, spelling, and/or written language was in place of or in addition to instruction provided by the regular classroom teacher in each area. In the area of spelling, instruction was provided significantly more often as a supplement to regular class instruction rather than as a replacement for it ($\chi^2(1) = 6.12$, $p < .05$). In the other academic areas, instruction was considered to be supplemental as often as it was considered to be in place of regular classroom instruction (see Table 6).

Insert Table 6 about here

Materials. Slightly more than half (n = 67) of the 128 teachers indicated the type of material they relied on most with their target student in reading. Of these, 31% noted that a commercial program (DISTAR, Frostig, etc.) was their primary material. The child's classroom text, other texts, and consumables were indicated to be the primary material for 18%, 16%, and 15% of the 67 respondents, respectively. For math, 57 teachers reported their primary instructional material. Thirty percent listed the child's regular classroom math text as the material used most often; locally developed programs and consumables were primary materials for 21% and 19%, respectively. Sixty-two teachers indicated a primary instructional material in spelling. For this group, the child's classroom text was the most popular (used as the primary material by 29%), followed by consumables (23%) and locally developed programs (16%) (see Table 7).

Insert Table 7 about here

Methods. For the teachers who reported their primary method of instruction in reading (n = 51), math (n = 45), and spelling (n = 43), two-thirds indicated that they primarily emphasize work on subskills in both reading and math; 37% said this was their primary method in spelling. Practice was said to be the most relied on method by 22% in reading, 13% in math, and 35% in spelling (see Table 8).

Insert Table 8 about here

Motivational strategies. In the three academic areas of reading, math, and spelling, social reinforcers were listed most frequently as the primary motivational strategy used. The next most frequently mentioned motivational strategy was indirect reinforcers (see Table 9).

Insert Table 9 about here

Bases for Program Decisions

IEP decisions. Teachers were asked to list what they felt were the most important sources of information used in determining long-term goals and short-term objectives for their target students' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). Teachers who had not participated in developing the IEP were asked to skip this section of the survey; 111 subjects responded to the long-term goal items and 113 completed the item relating to short-term objectives. Overall, results from tests, particularly achievement tests, were reported as the most influential piece of information in determining long-term goals. More specifically, 19.8% of the respondents to this item reported that discrepancies between ability and achievement tests was the major influence, and 15.3% and 12.6% indicated that overall scores on achievement tests and patterns of scores on achievement tests, respectively, were the most important type of information used. While

64% of the respondents listed items that fall into the category of "tests" as the most influential information in determining long-term goals, 24% of the teachers indicated that for their student observation of performance and informal assessments had the greatest influence (see Table 10).

Insert Table 10 about here

In contrast to the relative importance of formal tests when developing long-term goals, criterion-referenced tests, personal observation of performance, and informal assessments were mentioned most frequently as the primary basis for decisions about short-term objectives. Twenty-three percent of the respondents said that criterion-referenced measures were the most influential type of information used in determining short-term objectives, 15% felt that personal observation of student progress was the most important factor, and 13% relied on information from informal assessments conducted during previous instruction (see Table 11).

Insert Table 11 about here

The reliance on informal types of assessment increased in relation to reliance on tests as teachers reported the second and third most influential pieces of information for determining both long-term goals and short-term objectives. Few subjects indicated that factors reflecting consultation with others were the most

important influence for either long-term goals or short-term objectives, although a number listed items from this category as their second or third choice. Internal constraints were not perceived to be influential in determining long-term goals or short-term objectives by the majority of the subjects (see Table 12).

Insert Table 12 about here

Program determinants. Teachers were asked to identify the factors influential in determining the amount of time services were provided, the materials used, the methods used, and the motivational strategies used. As seen in Table 13, student characteristics (e.g., attention span, motivation, social skills, etc.) appeared to be an important factor for most teachers when making decisions about the various components of the student's program. It was the most frequently mentioned first choice factor when teachers were asked what influenced their decisions about selection of time, methods, and motivational strategies for individual students (cited by 26.8%, 43.5%, and 56.0% of the teachers, respectively). "Student characteristics" was listed by approximately the same number of teachers (15.3%) as "performance on informal measures" (18.5%) and "materials available" (16.1%) for determining the materials used with the student.

Insert Table 13 about here

When knowledge of student characteristics was grouped with the other experiential factors (past experience with student, and past experience with students with similar problems, and college coursework, professional journals, workshops), this category was the one cited most frequently as most influential in determining the components of the students' programs. If one of these factors was not mentioned as a teacher's first choice, then it usually was mentioned as a second or third choice. Test based and objective information often were reported to be influential in determining the amount of time allocated for service and the materials to be used, but were cited rarely for determining methods and motivational strategies. Aside from the 21.5% of the teachers who indicated that family information, parent requests, or consultation with other team members was the third most influential factor in determining motivational strategies, items in this category seldom were reported to have much influence. Also having relatively little influence were factors relating to classroom information. Items reflecting internal constraints (school/district policy, student's schedule, teacher's caseload, etc.) were reported by some subjects to be influential, particularly in decisions about time allocation and use of materials. See Table 14 for a breakdown of the subjects' first, second, and third selections summed within categories.

Insert Table 14 about here

Basis for program changes. Using a four point scale (1=very

unlikely, 2=unlikely, 3=likely, and 4=very likely), teachers indicated how likely they were to make changes in (a) materials, (b) methods, (c) motivational strategies, and (d) time allocation, student/teacher ratio, etc. Overall, subjects indicated that they were somewhat likely to make changes in materials ($\bar{X}$ = 2.8; SD = .06), methods ($\bar{X}$ = 2.8 ; SD = .06), and motivations ($\bar{X}$ = 2.9; SD = .07), but relatively less likely to make changes in time allocation, student/teacher ratio, etc. ($\bar{X}$ = 2.4; SD = .07).

When asked the basis for any changes made, 68% of the subjects indicated that "personal observation of student performance" would be their primary consideration. "Objective performance data" was said to be the primary influence on change decisions by 19% of the subjects; nine subjects (7%) indicated that "external constraints" (scheduling, changes in classroom curriculum, etc.) were the chief determinants of any changes in the target students' program.

Evaluation Practices

Evaluation methods. Teachers indicated the three major evaluation procedures they used in reading, math, spelling, written language, and other areas. As may be seen in Table 15, no single procedure or even general type of evaluation was favored in reading and math. In reading, criterion-referenced measures, teacher-made tests/oral quizzes, informal observation of student performance, direct and frequent measurement (precision teaching-type) and standardized achievement tests each were listed as the primary form of evaluation by 11-13% of the subjects. The responses of the remaining 36% of the subjects were scattered among the other evaluation

procedures listed in the survey. For math, this pattern repeated itself, with the additional mention of scoring workbooks. Teacher-made tests/oral quizzes were clearly the most relied on form of evaluation in spelling; 37.2% of the subjects listed this as their primary spelling evaluation procedure; no other procedure was listed by more than 9.6% of the respondents. In the area of written language, 32.6% of the 86 teachers reporting that they evaluate students in this area said that informal observation of student performance was their chief form of evaluation, and 14.0% reported that they rely on teacher-made tests/oral quizzes. For the 23 subjects who indicated that they evaluate students in other academic areas, the most frequently mentioned primary evaluation procedure was informal observation of student performance--this was cited by 34.8% of this group.

Insert Table 15 about here

Frequency of evaluation. In addition to listing their primary form of evaluation within each academic area, teachers also indicated how often this form of evaluation was used. Table 16 is a summary of the percentage of subjects within each academic area who indicated that their primary form of evaluation was used daily, semi-weekly, weekly, or at some other level of frequency. Almost one-third of the 112 subjects who indicated the frequency with which they used their primary form of evaluation in reading said they used it weekly or semi-weekly; 33.0% said it was used daily. In math, 30.5% indicated

that the evaluation procedure most important to them was used weekly or semi-weekly; 37.9% reported that it was used daily. More than half (58.2%) of the 91 subjects who evaluated students in spelling said their primary evaluation procedure was used on a weekly or semi-weekly basis; another 25.3% said that their chief form of evaluation in spelling was used on a daily basis. Subjects' first choice for evaluation in written language also generally occurred on at least a weekly basis - usually more often (37.3% daily; 15.7% semi-weekly, 26.5% weekly).

Insert Table 16 about here

Recording evaluation information. Only two teachers said that they kept no written records on the performance/progress of their target student. Charts and/or graphs were reported to be used by 72 subjects (56.3%). Information was said to be recorded in gradebooks by 60 subjects (46.9%) and on checklists by 70 teachers (54.7%). A large proportion of the subjects (79.7%) said they kept samples of the student's work and 33% listed other methods of recording evaluation data such as daily logs, written progress reports, recording progress on the IEP, student folders, teacher folders, and teacher planbooks.

Use of evaluation information. Subjects were asked to indicate their primary use of evaluation information as well as other uses for this information. Seventy-two teachers signified their primary use for evaluation information; only one teacher reported that evaluation information was not used. The remaining 55 teachers, while not

identifying their primary use of evaluation data, reported ways in which they generally use this information.

Of those subjects who identified the major use for the evaluation information they collect, 23.6% reported that they chiefly use this information to monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives (see Table 17). Discussing progress with the student was indicated to be the most important use of evaluation information for 22.2% of the teachers. Approximately 30% of the teachers said evaluation information was used primarily either to change the instructional plan (13.8%) or to decide when to review or reteach (16.6%).

Insert Table 17 about here

For the 127 subjects who cited one or more uses for evaluation information, the most frequently listed item was "discuss progress with student" (listed by 89.1%). Almost as frequently listed was "discuss progress with parent" (87.5%), "change instructional plan" (83.6%), and "monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives" (82.0%). Use of evaluation information to modify IEP goals and objectives was reported by 69.5% of the teachers, and 68.0% said they used it when discussing progress with the regular classroom teacher. Approximately half of the teachers said that they use evaluative information to assign grades and 44.5% said it was used to write notes that are sent home. The remaining two items on the list of possible uses included in the survey were checked by approximately 30% of the subjects each. These two items are "discuss progress with lead teacher, principal,

special education director, etc." and "review progress with team."

Frequency of use of evaluation information. When subjects were asked to indicate the uses to which they put evaluation information, they also were asked to indicate how often they used the evaluation information in the manner(s) that they indicated. Not all subjects indicated the frequency with which they used evaluation, and of those who did indicate frequencies, not all indicated the frequencies for every use they had listed.

The uses for evaluation information contained in the survey and the frequencies with which they were reported to be used are listed in Table 18. As can be seen, the frequency with which evaluation information is used in particular ways varies with the use made of the information. For example, most of those who use evaluation information to discuss progress with a student do this on a fairly frequent basis (36.2% daily, 28.8% weekly), while use of this type of information when reviewing progress with the team is reported to occur much less frequently (51.4% yearly, 20.0% semi-annually, 17.1% quarterly). Teachers were more vague about the frequency with which they used evaluation information to do something with the student's program than they were when indicating the frequency with which they discussed progress with others or used the information in an administrative fashion (monitor progress; assign grades). This is evident by the number of persons saying that evaluation information was used "as needed" rather than specifying a particular time frame (i.e., daily, monthly, etc).

Insert Table 18 about here

Time spent in evaluation. Subjects were asked what percentage of the total amount of instructional and preparatory time devoted to the target student was spent in performance/progress evaluation activities. Overall, 76% of the respondents indicated that they spent up to 30% of their time in evaluation activities and 24% said that they spent more than 30% of their time in this way (see Table 19). One-third of the subjects said they spent 11-20% of their time in evaluation related actitivies and 34 teachers (27.2%) estimated their time spent in evaluation at 21-30%. When asked whether they would like to see this time increased, decreased, or stay the same, most teachers (60.0%) who responded were satisfied with the way things were, 27.2% indicated they would like to see their time spent in evaluation increased, and 12.8% felt that they currently were spending too much time with evaluation activities.

Insert Table 19 about here

Teacher Satisfaction and Attributions for Program Success

Satisfaction. On a scale of one to four, with 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=satisfied, and 4=very satisfied, teachers indicated their degree of satisfaction with the student's program in terms of (a) materials available, (b) amount of instructional time, (c) methods being used, (d) ability to monitor

progress, and (e) the student's progress. Overall, teachers reported satisfaction with the student's current program and progress. They were least satisfied with the amount of instructional time the student received--34.6% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this aspect of the student's program. In the other categories, satisfaction was expressed by 80% or more of the teachers. The mean ratings and percentages of subjects indicating satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each item may be found in Table 20.

Insert Table 20 about here

Reason for progress. The final question of the survey asked subjects to rank order the importance of six items as contributors to the success/progress made by the target student by the time of the annual review. None of the 122 respondents thought that the material used with the student was the main reason for student progress. While "the instructional approach used" was cited by only 11.5% of the teachers, none of the other items was listed first by more than 30 (24.6%) teachers. The individual items and the percentage of subjects giving each a ranking of one are presented in Table 21.

Insert Table 21 about here

Discussion

In educational research little attention has been paid to identifying current practices of special education teachers. The

research that has been done has been aimed primarily at identifying discriminative characteristics of effective teachers (Westling, Koorland, & Rose, 1981). However, as in regular education, attempts to identify generalizable concomitants of effective teaching have been less than successful. For this reason some researchers (e.g., Clark, 1979; Hunter, 1979; Joyce & Harootinian, 1964; Shavelson, 1973) now believe that it may be more useful to consider not only what teachers do, but why teachers do what they do. In the present study, the questions of "what?" and "why?" were addressed. The study provides information on a national cross-section of programs for LD students. Although the number of teachers involved in this study was not large for a cross-sectional investigation of this nature, the responses of these teachers--all members of a national professional organization, and many of whom hold advanced degress--should reflect current trends in the field.

A large amount of variability in programs was evident in responses to this survey, especially in relation to the amount of time service was provided, the academic areas covered, and the materials, methods, motivational strategies, and evaluation procedures used. Likewise, teachers differed widely in what they reported to be the major influences on their decisions. However, there was evidence that the type of information considered influential when making decisions varied as a function of the decision to be made. For example, long-term goals were reported to be most heavily influenced by standardized assessment measures while short-term objectives were more frequently reported to be influenced by criterion-referenced measures and

observation of student performance.

Subjective teacher judgments appeared to play a major role in influencing intervention decisions. This is evident in the extent to which factors representing experience with the student (e.g., student characteristics, personal observation of the student's performance, etc.), or previous experience of the teacher (e.g., experience with other students, educational coursework, etc.) were cited as being influential. Not only were subjective experiential factors frequently cited in relation to initial decisions about a student's program, but also when teachers were asked the basis for program changes. In spite of the fact that the teachers reported that they evaluated students frequently and 85% of the teachers indicated that they spent more than 10% of their time in evaluation activities, only 19% said that any changes in the student's program would be based on "objective performance data."

Teacher reliance on subjective data about students also was reported by Clark, Yinger, and Wildfong (1978), who found that the cues most frequently rated as useful by regular education teacher in making decisions about how to teach an activity were related to student characteristics. It appears that even though special education teachers are encouraged through training and required by law to attend to objective information about students and to focus instruction around specific instructional objectives, they also rely heavily on their own subjective perceptions of the student. If this is the sort of information which teachers believe to be most useful to them, perhaps rather than repeatedly admonishing them to rely on

objective data in making decisions, there is a need both to help them to see the usefulness of using objective data and to help them to appropriately interpret and use the subjective data upon which they do rely.

The teachers in this study indicated that they generally were satisfied with the instructional program and the progress of the student under consideration. In light of the great amount of variability in the programs described in this study, this satisfaction is especially significant for those researchers proposing ways to improve the instructional process for learning disabled students. It is apparent that there is no instructional approach generally perceived as useful by those who actually teach LD students. This was demonstrated by the variable responses to questions about program structure and by the lack of agreement among teachers when asked the main reason for progress made by the target student. But, teachers are satisfied with how they are teaching students. Since it is likely that there will be resistance on the part of teachers to making changes in practices perceived as satisfactory, it may be vital for researchers to understand what teachers believe to be effective practice before expecting them to alter what they do.

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Footnote

Phyllis Mirkin was the Research Coordinator for this study. Although she passed away before this manuscript was completed, she was actively involved in all aspects of the investigation reported here, including the development of this research report.

Appreciation is extended to all the teachers who took the time to complete this survey. Cathy Walters did an excellent job of accurately and efficiently coding data. Martha Thurlow's editorial assistance and general support throughout this project was greatly appreciated. Special thanks are also due to Marilyn Hyatt not only for typing this manuscript, but for typing draft after draft of the survey.

Table 1

Sources of Information, Influential Factors, and Types of Evaluation: Items by Category

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Tests

- Overall scores on ability tests
- Overall scores on achievement tests
- Pattern of scores on ability tests
- Pattern of scores on achievement tests
- Discrepancies between ability and achievement tests
- Other standardized assessments
- Performance on criterion-referenced measures

Observation of Performance

- Progress on previous IEP objectives
- Informal assessments done during previous instruction
- Other informal assessments
- Personal observation of student performance
- Behavioral observations/information

Consultation

- Classroom teacher's priorities
- Parental input/priorities
- Input of other team members

Constraints

- Constraints of times, materials, teachers available
- District policies
- A commercial or locally constructed list of long-term goals, short-term objectives, and/or instructional suggestions

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

Test Based and Objective Information

- Demonstrated ability on psychological tests
- Performance on standardized tests
- Performance on informal measures
- Formal observation
- Medical information (hearing, medications, etc.)

Classroom Information

- Referring teacher's statement of original referral problem
- Classroom teacher's comments on classroom progress
- Classroom teacher's requests
- Material covered by regular classroom

Experiential Factors

- Student characteristics (e.g., attention span, motivation, social skills, etc.)
- Past experience with student
- Past experience with students with similar problems
- College coursework, professional journals, workshops, etc.

Constraints

- Materials available
- Your caseload
- Rest of student's schedule
- Other students taught at same time
- Policy of lead teacher/school/district
- Instructor's guide(s) for text(s)

Consultation/Family Information

- Family information
- Consultation with others (aside from classroom teacher and parents)
- Parent requests

TYPES OF EVALUATION

Formal Tests

- Standardized achievement tests
- Standardized diagnostic measures
- District developed tests
- Basal text mastery tests
- Formal observation

Informal Tests

- Criterion referenced measures
- Direct and frequent measurement (precision teaching-type)
- Teacher-made tests/oral quizzes
- Oral, silent timings
- Check number of short-term objectives mastered

Observation of Performance

- Scoring workbooks
- Scoring worksheets
- Amount of work completed
- Number of correct flashcards
- Listening to oral reading
- Informal observation of student performance

Consultation

- Consultation with classroom teacher regarding classroom performance

Table 2

Grade Distribution of Students

(n=128)

Grade	%
Pre-school	0.8
1	4.7
2	9.4
3	15.6
4	14.1
5	6.3
6	8.6
7	7.8
8	9.4
9	6.3
10	7.0
11	4.7
12	.8
Not specified	4.7

Table 3

Year Student Began Receiving Special Education Services and Year Responding Teacher Began Providing Service[a]

(n=128)

Year Started[b]	Special Ed Service	Service by Teacher
1972	2.3	--
1973	1.6	0.8
1974	3.1	0.8
1975	3.9	0.8
1976	7.0	1.6
1977	3.9	1.6
1978	10.2	5.5
1979	28.1	25.0
1980	24.2	54.7
1981	6.3	7.8
Not specified	9.4	1.6

[a]Entries in table are percentages of students for each year.
[b]Data were collected Spring 1981.

Table 4

Date IEP was Written and Date of

Most Recent Review

(n=128)

Date	Written %	Reviewed %
1978	0.8	0.8
1979	1.6	-
1980	68.0	3.9
1981	25.0	42.2
Not specified	4.7	53.1

Table 5

Level of Service Provided to Target Students

(n=128)

Level	%
I - Monitoring	2.3
II - Consultation	4.7
III - Direct Service (up to 4 hours/day)	69.5
IV - Direct Service (more than 4 hours/day)	4.7
V - All day, self-contained	12.5
VI - Special School/Residential	3.1
Not specified	3.1

Table 6

Number of Students in Each Academic Area Receiving Instruction that is Supplemental to or Replaces Regular Classroom Instruction

Academic Area	Supplemental	Replaces
Reading	64	51
Math	55	42
Spelling[a]	59	35
Written Language	52	41

[a]Difference between numbers is significant at $p < .05$.

Table 7

Percentages of Teachers Within Academic Areas Indicating Each Material as Their Primary Instructional Material

Material	Academic Area[a] Reading n=67[b]	Math n=57	Spelling n=62
Child's classroom text	17.9[c]	29.8	29.0
Other standard texts	16.4	12.3	4.8
Commercial programs	31.3	10.5	12.9
Locally developed programs	10.4	21.0	16.1
Consumables	14.9	19.3	22.6
Manipulables	1.5	5.3	1.6
Other materials	7.5	1.8	12.9

[a]Written language was not included in this item.

[b]N's refer to the number of subjects within each academic area who indicated the one type of material they relied on the most.

[c]Percentages are calculated on the basis of the n within each academic area.

Table 8

Percentages of Teachers Within Academic Areas Indicating Each Method as their Primary Method of Instruction

Method	Academic Area[a] Reading n =51[b]	Math n =45	Spelling n=43
Work on subskills	66.7[c]	68.9	37.2
Practice	21.6	13.3	34.9
Modality training	3.9	2.2	16.3
Modeling	3.9	11.1	2.3
Games/machinery	3.9	4.4	7.0
Other methods	0.0	0.0	2.3

[a]Written language was not included in this item.

[b]N's refer to the number of subjects within each academic area who indicated the one type of material they relied on the most.

[c]Percentages are calculated on the basis of the n within each academic area.

Table 9

Percentages of Teachers Within Academic Areas Listing Each Motivational Strategy as their Primary Means of Motivation

Motivational Strategy	Academic Area[a] Reading n=58[b]	Math n=49	Spelling n=41
Social reinforcers	63.8[c]	53.1	51.2
Activity reinforcers	8.6	10.2	7.3
Concrete reinforcers	5.2	6.1	9.8
Indirect reinforcers	19.0	16.3	22.0
Contracts	1.7	4.1	4.9
Self-management strategies	1.7	10.2	4.9
Punishment procedures	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other strategies	0.0	0.0	0.0

[a]Written language was not included in this item.

[b]N's refer to the number of subjects within each academic area who indicated the one type of material they relied on the most.

[c]Percentages are calculated on the basis of the n within each academic area.

Table 10

First Choice Selections of Sources of Information for Determining Long-Term Goals

(n=111)

Sources of Information	Category Percentage	Item Percentage
Tests	63.9	
Overall scores on ability tests		2.7
Overall scores on achievement tests		15.3
Pattern of scores on ability tests		6.3
Pattern of scores on achievement tests		12.6
Discrepancies between ability and achievement tests		19.8
Other standardized assessments		0.9
Performance on criterion-referenced measures		6.3
Observation of Performance	24.3	
Progress on previous IEP objectives		6.3
Informal assessments done during previous instruction		7.2
Other informal assessment		0.0
Personal observation of student performance		8.1
Behavioral observations/information		2.7
Consultation	6.3	
Classroom teacher's priorities		4.5
Parental input/priorities		0.9
Input of other team members		0.9
Constraints	4.5	
Constraints of time, materials, teachers available		0.0
District policies		1.8
A commercial or locally constructed list of long-term objectives and/or instructional suggestions		2.7
Other	0.9	

Table 11

First Choice Selection of Sources of Information

for Determining Short-Term Objectives

(n=113)

Sources of Information	Category Percentage	Item Percentage
Tests	43.3	
Overall scores on ability tests		0.0
Overall scores on achievement tests		3.5
Pattern of scores on ability tests		4.4
Pattern of scores on achievement tests		4.4
Discrepancies between ability and achievement tests		5.3
Other standardized assessments		2.7
Performance on criterion-referenced measures		23.0
Observation of performance	45.0	
Progress on previous IEP objectives		8.8
Informal assessments done during previous instruction		13.3
Other informal assessment		4.4
Personal observation of student performance		15.0
Behavioral observations/information		3.5
Consultation	5.3	
Classroom teacher's priorities		3.5
Parental input/priorities		0.0
Input of other team members		1.8
Constraints	6.2	
Constraints of time, materials, teachers available		1.8
District policies		0.9
A commercial or locally constructed list of long-term goals, short-term objectives, and/or instructional suggestions		3.5
Other	0.0	

Table 12

Percentages of Teachers Listing Each Category of Information as First, Second, and Third Choice Selections for Determining Long-Term Goals and Short-Term Objectives

	Category	Selection[a] 1	2	3
Long-Term Goals	Tests	64.0	48.2	23.1
	Observation of Performance	24.3	35.4	44.5
	Consultation	6.3	12.8	25.9
	Constraints	4.5	3.6	5.6
	Other	0.8	0.0	0.8
Short-Term Objectives	Tests	43.4	16.1	21.1
	Observation of Performance	45.1	63.4	50.5
	Consultation	5.3	16.0	17.4
	Constraints	6.2	3.6	10.1
	Other	0.0	0.8	0.8

[a]The number of teachers listing first, second, and third choices for long-term goals and short-term objectives ranged from 108 to 113.

Table 13

First Choice Selections of Influential Factors in Determining Time, Materials, Methods, and Motivational Strategies

Category/Factor	Academic Area[a] Time (n= 123)	Materials (n= 124)	Methods (n= 124)	Motivations (n= 125)
Test Based and Objective Information				
Demonstrated ability on psychological tests	8.9	0.8	2.4	0.0
Performance on standardized tests	12.2	7.3	3.2	0.8
Performance on informal measures	7.3	18.5	11.3	2.4
Formal observation	0.0	1.6	1.6	4.0
Medical information	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Classroom Information				
Referring teacher's statement	3.3	1.6	0.8	0.0
Classroom teacher's comments on classroom progress	7.3	2.4	0.8	1.6
Classroom teacher's requests	2.4	0.8	1.6	0.0
Material covered by regular classroom	0.0	9.7	1.6	0.0
Experiential Factors				
Student characteristics	26.8	15.3	43.5	56.0
Past experience with student	2.4	8.1	11.3	13.6
Past experience with students with similar problems	2.4	8.9	10.5	9.6
College coursework, professional journals, workshops	0.0	4.0	8.1	4.0
Constraints				
Materials available	0.0	16.1	0.8	1.6
Your caseload	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rest of student's schedule	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other students taught at same time	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.6
Policy of lead teacher/school/district	7.3	0.8	0.8	0.0
Instructor's guide(s) for text(s)	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.0
Consultation/Family Information				
Family information	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
Consultation with others (aside from classroom teacher and parents)	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.8
Parent requests	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	3.3	1.6	0.0	1.6

[a]Percentages listed are based on number responding within each category.

Table 14

First, Second, and Third Choice Selections of Influential Factors by Category, for Time, Materials, Methods, and Motivational Strategies

Area	Category	Selection[a] 1	2	3
Time	Test based and objective information	28.4	24.4	19.5
	Classroom information	13.0	21.1	14.4
	Experiential factors	31.7	26.1	27.1
	Constraints	22.7	23.5	33.1
	Consultation	0.8	4.1	4.2
Materials	Test based and objective information	28.2	18.1	15.5
	Classroom information	14.4	19.9	16.3
	Experiential factors	36.3	39.7	32.5
	Constraints	18.5	19.1	30.0
	Consultation/family information	0.8	3.3	3.5
Methods	Test based and objective information	18.5	17.9	11.1
	Classroom information	4.8	4.8	11.1
	Experiential factors	73.4	51.1	43.9
	Constraints	3.2	22.7	21.5
	Consultation/family information	0.0	2.4	10.4
Motivational Strategies	Test based and objective information	7.2	5.8	6.6
	Classroom information	1.6	7.4	10.3
	Experiential factors	83.2	73.3	44.3
	Constraints	3.2	6.6	17.8
	Consultation/family information	3.2	6.6	20.8

[a]The number of subjects listing first, second, third choices within the areas of time, materials, methods, and motivational strategies ranged from 106 to 123. Percentages listed are based on number responding within each area; percentages do not add to 100.0 because the category "other" is not included in this table.

Table 15

First Choice Selections of Types of Evaluation Used in Reading, Math, Spelling, Written Language, and Other Areas

Type of Evaluation	Academic Area[a] Reading (n=114)	Math (n=98)	Spelling (n=94)	Written Language (n=86)	Other (n=23)
Formal Tests	27.2	21.4	23.5	7.1	0.0
Standardized achievement tests	11.4	10.2	9.6	3.5	0.0
Standardized diagnostic measures	9.6	8.2	5.3	1.2	0.0
District developed tests	1.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.0
Basal text mastery tests	4.4	2.0	6.4	0.0	0.0
Formal observation	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.2	0.0
Informal Tests	38.7	38.8	55.3	30.4	30.3
Criterion-referenced tests	13.2	10.2	9.6	7.0	4.3
Direct and frequent measurement	12.3	13.3	6.4	4.7	13.0
Teacher-made tests/oral quizzes	13.2	12.2	37.2	14.0	13.0
Oral silent timings	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Check number of short-term objectives mastered	0.0	3.1	2.1	4.7	0.0
Observation of Performance	29.0	31.5	18.1	53.6	52.1
Scoring workbooks	7.0	11.2	6.4	4.7	4.3
Scoring worksheets	3.5	7.1	2.1	9.3	8.7
Amount of work completed	1.8	1.0	0.0	7.0	4.3
Number of correct flashcards	0.9	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0
Listening to oral reading	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Informal observation of student performance	13.2	12.2	8.5	32.6	34.8
Consultation	2.6	7.1	3.2	4.7	13.0
Consultation with classroom teacher regarding classroom performance	2.6	7.1	3.2	4.7	13.0
Other	2.4	0.8	0.0	4.7	4.3

[a]Percentages listed are based on number responding within each area.

Table 16

Frequency of Use of the Primary Form of Evaluation Listed by Subjects in Reading, Math, Spelling, and Written Language

Academic Area	Frequency			
	Daily	Semi-Weekly	Weekly	Other
Reading (n=112)	33.0	15.2	13.4	38.4
Math (n=95)	37.9	10.5	20.0	31.6
Spelling (n=91)	25.3	6.6	51.6	16.5
Written Language (n=83)	37.3	15.7	26.5	20.5

[a]Percentages listed are based on number responding within each area.

Table 17

Percentage of Teachers Listing Each Use of Evaluation Information as Their Primary Use of Such Information

(n=72)

Use	%
Discuss progress with student	22.2
Discuss progress with parent	8.3
Discuss progress with classroom teacher	6.9
Consult with lead teacher, principal, special education director, etc.	1.3
Send notes home	0.0
Change instructional plan (materials, methods, etc.)	13.8
Decide when to review, reteach	16.6
Monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives	23.6
Review progress with team	2.8
Modify IEP goals and objectives	1.4
Assign grades	2.8
Other	0.0

Table 18

Frequencies: Uses of Evaluation

Use	% listing Frequency	Frequency[a]
Discuss progress with student (n=80)	36.2	daily
	28.8	weekly
Discuss progress with teacher (n=76)	44.7	3-4 times/yr.
	23.7	monthly
	10.5	2 times/yr.
Discuss progress with regular classroom teacher (n=57)	36.8	weekly
	17.5	monthly
	15.8	2-3 times/wk.
Consult with lead teacher, principal etc. (n=36)	25.0	monthly
	19.4	3-4 times/yr.
	13.9	as needed
	11.1	yearly
	11.1	2 times/yr.
Send notes home (n=57)	23.3	as needed
	20.9	weekly
	14.0	3-4 times/yr.
	11.6	monthly
Change instructional plan (n=62)	46.8	as needed
	16.1	weekly
Decide when to review/reteach (n=62)	24.2	as needed
	22.6	daily
	22.6	weekly
Monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives (n=66)	31.8	3-4 times/yr.
	22.7	monthly
	12.1	weekly
Review progress with team (n=35)	51.4	yearly
	20.0	2 times/yr.
	17.1	3-4 times/yr.
Modify IEP goals and objectives (n=56)	23.2	yearly
	23.2	as needed
	17.9	2 times/yr.
	17.9	3-4 times/yr.
Assign grades (n=36)	66.7	3-4 times/yr.
	13.9	6 times/yr.

[a]Frequencies listed are only those cited by at least 10% of the subjects responding to the item.

Table 19

Percentage of Teacher Time Spent in Evaluation

(n=125)

Time Spent in Evaluation	% Teachers
up to 10%	15.2
11-20%	33.6
21-30%	27.2
31-45%	9.6
46-60%	8.0
61-75%	4.0
more than 75%	2.4

Table 20

Mean Ratings and Percentages of Teachers Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Various Components of the Instructional Program

Program Components	X Rating	% Satisfied[a]	% Dissatisfied[b]
Materials available (n=128)	3.0	79.7	20.3
Amount of instructional time (n=127)	2.7	65.4	34.6
Methods (n=127)	3.1	92.9	7.1
Ability to monitor progress (n=128)	3.0	82.0	18.0
The student's progress (n=123)	3.1	83.7	16.3

[a]Percentages are based on the number of subjects indicating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with each program component.

[b]Percentages are based on the number of subjects indicating that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each program component.

Table 21

Reasons for Progress and the Percentage of Subjects Ranking Each as the Main Reason for the Target Student's Progress

(n=122)

Item	Percentage giving ranking of "1"
The instructional approach used	11.5
The material used	0.0
The additional instruction time spent in target areas	21.3
The lower student/teacher ratio	23.0
Increased student motivation	19.7
Ability to closely monitor student progress and make changes when needed	24.6

APPENDIX A

Copy of Survey and Supplemental Form

PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

PART A | SCHOOL AND TEACHER INFORMATION

Type of School: _____Rural _____Suburban _____Urban

_____Elementary _____Middle/Jr. High _____Secondary/Senior High

Teacher Information: _____Female _____Male

How many years have you taught Special Education students?_____

Please identify the highest degree you hold_____

Approximately how many children do you serve each day?

Number served: _____Direct service _____Indirect service

For the remainder of the survey, respond to items while keeping in mind the program of the student selected according to the attached directions.

PART B | STUDENT INFORMATION

1. For this particular student: _____Age _____Grade _____Race
2. Month and year Special Education service began_____
3. Month and year you started working with this student_____
4. Date the current Individual Educational Plan (IEP) was written_____
5. Date of the last IEP periodic review_____
6. What level of service do you provide this student? Circle one.

   Level:

   I - Monitoring
   II - Consultation
   III - Direct service - up to 4 hours/day
   IV - Direct service - more than 4 hours/day
   V - All day, self-contained
   VI - Special School/Residential

7. How much Special Education service does this student receive in the following areas:

Area	# Min/day	#Days/wk	Area	# Min/day	# Days/wk
Reading	_____	_____	Written Language	_____	_____
Math	_____	_____	Other	_____	_____
Spelling	_____	_____	(Specify):_____		

8. What are the criteria for a student to be classified as learning disabled in your school/district?

PART C SELECTION OF IEP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

If you were not involved in writing this student's IEP, skip this part and go on to PART D.

Use the items listed in Section C of the accompanying form (the blue sheet) to respond to the following questions. Please rank order your answers from most important to least important.

What sources of information do you feel were the most important in determining -

a. Long term goals:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," #19, was used, please specify:_____

b. Short term objectives:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," #19, was used, please specify:_____

PART D PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. For each area listed below, check whether the instruction you provide is in place of or supplementary to classroom instruction.

Area	In place of	Supplementary	Area	In place of	Supplementary
Reading	_____	_____	Written Language	_____	_____
Math	_____	_____	Other (specify):_____	_____	_____
Spelling	_____	_____			

For Questions 2, 3, and 4, within each area in which you provide instruction, please asterisk (*) the material, method, and motivational strategy you rely on the most with this student. Check (√) anything else used regularly within each academic area.

2. Material	Examples	Reading	Math	Spelling	Other ( )
Child's classroom text		_____	_____	_____	_____
Other standard texts		_____	_____	_____	_____
Commercial programs	DISTAR, Frostig, KeyMath	_____	_____	_____	_____
Locally developed programs	Math/reading programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
Consumables	Workbooks, worksheets	_____	_____	_____	_____
Manipulables	Cuisinaire rods, flannel board	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify):_____		_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Method	Examples	Reading	Math	Spelling	Other ( )
Work on subskills	Regrouping in subtraction Syllabication Comprehension skills	____	____	____	____
Practice	Oral reading practice Writing times tables Isolated word practice Writing in journals	____	____	____	____
Modality training	VAKT (visual, auditory kinesthetic, tactile)	____	____	____	____
Modeling	Student listens to selection before reading Student reads while teacher reads Student imitates solving of math problem	____	____	____	____
Games and machinery	Tape recorder Language master Computer games	____	____	____	____
Other (specify):_____		____	____	____	____

4. Motivation	Examples	Reading	Math	Spelling	Other ( )
Social reinforcers	Verbal praise, posted praise, working with friend, positive note home	____	____	____	____
Activity reinforcers	Use typewriter, have free time have early dismissal, be office assistant, do favorite school work	____	____	____	____
Concrete reinforcers	Candy, stars, stickers, money school materials	____	____	____	____
Indirect reinforcers	Earn points, tokens, checkmarks, etc., to trade in for a reinforcer	____	____	____	____
Contracts	Between student and teacher; between student, teacher, and parent	____	____	____	____
Self-management strategies	Having student charting his/her own data; scoring his/her own tests; self-monitoring of time on task	____	____	____	____
Punishment procedures	Time out, response cost, error correction, sad faces, red checkmarks, fines	____	____	____	____
Other (specify):_____		____	____	____	____

Over, please

PART E DETERMINANTS OF THE PROGRAM

Use the items listed in Section E of the blue form to respond to the following questions. Please rank order your answers from most important to least important.

What factors have been most influential in determining -

a. The amount of time the student receives services:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," # 23, was used, please specify: _____

b. The materials used:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," # 23, was used, please specify: _____

c. The methods used:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," # 23, was used, please specify: _____

d. The motivational strategies used:

Item #_____, _____, _____

If "Other," # 23, was used, please specify: _____

PART F CHANGES IN ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

How likely are you to make any changes in your instructional plan for this student between periodic reviews? (See PART D for examples of materials, methods, and motivational strategies.)

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Change materials	1	2	3	4
Change methods	1	2	3	4
Change motivational strategies	1	2	3	4
Change time allocation, student/ teacher ratio, etc.	1	2	3	4

Generally, what is the basis for your decision to make changes, or not to make changes, in this student's program? Rank order, please.

_____objective performance data

_____personal observation of student progress

_____external constraints (scheduling, changes in classroom curriculum, etc.)

_____other (specify): _____

PART G EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

Use the items listed in Section G of the blue form to respond to question 1.

1. What, if any, type of evaluation information do you collect in each of the areas in which you provide instruction? Please rank order your answers from most important to least important and indicate the frequency with which you use each form of evaluation (e.g., daily, 2X/week, monthly, etc.)

Area	Type of Evaluation (List item #)	Frequency
Reading	1._____	_____
	2._____	_____
	3._____	_____
Math	1._____	_____
	2._____	_____
	3._____	_____
Spelling	1._____	_____
	2._____	_____
	3._____	_____
Written Language	1._____	_____
	2._____	_____
	3._____	_____
Other (specify)	1._____	_____
_____	2._____	_____
	3._____	_____

2. Where do you record information about this student's performance/progress?

_____No written records kept _____Checklists

_____Charts and/or graphs _____File samples of work

_____Grade book _____Other (specify):_____

3. Of the total amount of instructional and preparatory time devoted to this student, what percentage would you estimate you spend in performance/progress evaluation activities? Circle one.

up to 10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-45% 46-60% 61-75% more than 75%

Under ideal conditions, would you like to see this percentage of time:

_____increased _____stay the same _____decreased

Over, please

4. How is evaluation information used with this student? Please asterisk (*) the major use and check (✓) any others that apply. Also, indicate the approximate frequency of each use.

	Frequency
_____Not used	_____
_____Discuss progress with student	_____
_____Discuss progress with parent	_____
_____Discuss progress with regular classroom teacher	_____
_____Consult with lead teacher, principal, special education director, etc.	_____
_____Send notes home	_____
_____Change instructional plan (materials, methods, etc.)	_____
_____Decide when to review, reteach	_____
_____Monitor progress on IEP goals and objectives	_____
_____Review progress with team	_____
_____Modify IEP goals and objectives	_____
_____Assign grades	_____
_____Other (specify):_____	_____

PART H MISCELLANEOUS

1. How satisfied are you with this student's program in terms of:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
a. Materials available	1	2	3	4
b. Amount of instructional time	1	2	3	4
c. Methods you are using	1	2	3	4
d. Ability to monitor progress	1	2	3	4
e. The student's progress	1	2	3	4

2. If this student has made appreciable progress by the time of the annual review, to what do you think this will mainly be due? Please rank order.

_____The instructional approach used

_____The material used

_____The additional instruction time spent in target areas

_____The lower student/teacher ratio

_____Increased student motivation

_____Ability to closely monitor student progress and make changes when needed

3. We welcome any comments you have on this survey or the instructional or evaluation process in general.

Use the following items in responding to questions in Part C, E, and G of the survey. The sections on this form are labeled to correspond with the portion of the survey for which those items are appropriate. These lists are by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to use the category "other"; we just ask that you specify what "other" stands for in the appropriate space on the survey itself.

Section C — Sources of Information

1. Overall scores on ability tests
2. Overall scores on achievement tests
3. Pattern of scores on ability tests
4. Pattern of scores on achievement tests
5. Discrepancies between ability and achievement tests
6. Other standardized assessments
7. Performance on criterion-referenced measures
8. Progress on previous IEP objectives
9. Informal assessments done during previous instruction
10. Other informal assessments
11. Personal observation of student performance
12. Behavioral observations/information
13. Classroom teacher's priorities
14. Parental input/priorities
15. Input of other team members
16. Constraints of times, materials, teachers available
17. District policies
18. A commercial or locally constructed list of long-term goals, short-term objectives, and/or instructional suggestions
19. Other

Section E — Influential Factors

1. Demonstrated ability on psychological tests
2. Performance on standardized tests
3. Performance on informal measures
4. Formal observation
5. Medical information (hearing, medications, etc.)
6. Family information
7. Referring teacher's statement of original referral problem
8. Classroom teacher's comments on classroom progress
9. Classroom teacher's requests
10. Material covered by regular classroom
11. Student characteristics (e.g., attention span, motivation, social skills, etc.)
12. Past experience with student
13. Past experience with students with similar problems
14. Materials available
15. Your caseload
16. Rest of student's schedule
17. Other students taught at same time
18. Policy of lead teacher/school/district
19. Instructor's guide(s) for text(s)
20. Consultation with others (aside from classroom teacher and parents)
21. Parent requests
22. College coursework, professional journals, workshops, etc.
23. Other

Section G — Types of Evaluation

1. Standardized achievement tests
2. Standardized diagnostic measures
3. District developed tests
4. Basal text mastery tests
5. Criterion referenced measures
6. Direct and frequent measurement (precision teaching-type)
7. Teacher-made tests/oral quizzes
8. Scoring workbooks
9. Scoring worksheets
10. Amount of work completed
11. Number of correct flashcards
12. Listening to oral reading
13. Oral, silent timings
14. Informal observation of student performance
15. Formal observation
16. Consultation with classroom teacher regarding classroom performance
17. Check number of short-term objectives mastered
18. Other

PUBLICATIONS

Institute for Research on Learning Disabilities
University of Minnesota

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Requests should be directed to: Editor, IRLD, 350 Elliott Hall; 75 East River Road, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

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